

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration and allowance of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

Claims 1-3 are pending in the present application, with Claim 1 being independent.

Claims 1 and 3 have been amended. No new matter has been added.

Initially, Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the indication that Claims 2 and 3 contain patentable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. In the present Amendment, Applicants have maintained these claims in dependent form because it is believed, for the reasons discussed below, that the independent claim is allowable.

Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over JP 7-105,850 in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,769,575 ("Murata") and U.S. Patent No. 5,595,520 ("Piascinski"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent Claim 1 of the invention, as amended, recites a method of manufacturing an image display apparatus having an airtight container including a rear plate having a plurality of electron-emitting devices, and a face plate disposed in opposition to the rear plate and having a phosphor and an electroconductive film. The method includes the steps of disposing the rear plate having the plurality of electron-emitting devices and the face plate having the phosphor and the electroconductive film such that the rear plate and the face plate are

opposite to each other and arranging a plurality of plate-shaped spacers between the rear plate and the face plate to assemble the airtight container, slanting the airtight container such that a longitudinal direction of the plate-shaped spacers is not perpendicular to a gravitational direction, and applying an electric field between the rear plate and the face plate while the airtight container is slanted.

JP 7-105,850, which relates to manufacture of a flat image display device, teaches the removal of foreign matter from a display device by an electric shock. The Office Action concedes that the citation does not teach applying an electric field between a rear plate and a face plate of an airtight container in an image display apparatus in a state in which the airtight container is slanted such that a longitudinal direction of plate-shaped spacers is not perpendicular to a gravitational direction.

The secondary citation to Piascinski, which relates to a cathode-ray tube particle removal apparatus and method, is said to suggest orienting a display in such a manner that gravity would assist in the removal of particles. The secondary citation to Murata teaches disposing plural spacers between plural line electrodes in an electron gun of an image display apparatus.

Applicants submit that it would not have been obvious to combine Piascinski and Murata with JP 7-105,850 in the manner proposed in the Office Action, without impermissible hindsight.

Piascinski discloses that particles are dislodged from the interior of an apparatus through the use of "thumper mechanisms" for physically striking a part of the apparatus, causing asynchronous vibrations that shake particles loose. The reference fails to

teach or suggest applying a voltage as a way to dislodge particles. It is submitted that there is no incentive, other than Applicants' disclosure, for combining the teachings of Piascinski and JP 7-105,850 in the manner proposed. Nor, it is submitted, is there incentive to combine Murata with the other cited art to arrive at a conclusion that it would be obvious that "spacers if disposed perpendicular to the force of gravity would impede the removal of the particles." Murata may disclose a plate-shaped spacer, but it neither teaches nor suggests particular spacer orientations with respect to gravity. Moreover, the reference is silent on the problem of dislodging or otherwise removing particles.

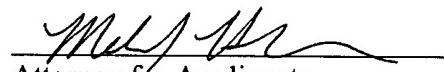
Therefore, it is submitted that independent Claim 1 patentably distinguishes the invention over the cited art. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the §103 rejection are requested.

Applicants submit that the independent claim patentably defines the invention over the citations of record. Further, the dependent claims should also be allowable for the same reasons that the base claim from which they depend is allowable, and further due to the additional features that they recite. Individual consideration of each of the dependent claims is respectfully requested.

Applicants submit that the application is in allowable form. Favorable consideration of the claims and passage to issue of the application at the Examiner's earliest convenience are solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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